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U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Marshals Service

Personal Security Handbook

How You and Your Family Can Minimize Risks to Personal Safety

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From the Attorney General

The U.S. Marshals Service is responsible for the security of federal court proceedings and facilities and for the safety of members of the judiciary and court officials. The significance of this responsibility is measured not only in terms of the number of individuals involved and the potential for harm that exists, it also embraces the larger mission of assuring that the judicial process established under the Constitution functions free of intimidation or interference.

The volume and violent nature of criminal cases brought into the federal justice system have escalated dramatically in recent years. They include international terrorists, major drug traffickers, and kingpins of organized crime. The number of acts of violence and reported threats to court officials has also increased significantly. Consequently, the need for prudent measures to ensure the safety of judges and other participants in the judicial process is imperative.

Although the Marshals Service has implemented innovative procedures to provide a safe physical environment for the operation of the courts, the potential for harm to court officials is not confined to the courthouse. A concern for personal safety must be carried beyond the workplace and into the daily lives of all judges so that they—and the members of their families—are not unnecessarily exposed to acts of violence.

While this *Personal Security Handbook* was designed primarily for the use of members of the federal judiciary and other court personnel, it offers a variety of security suggestions that can increase the personal security of any public official or private citizen. I encourage you to consider and adopt these suggestions and to share them with other members of your family.

Dick Thornburgh
Attorney General

From the Director

Providing for the security of the federal courts and the safety of its personnel has always been a priority responsibility of the Marshals Service. The challenges faced in meeting that responsibility, however, have never been greater than they are today.

Nevertheless, we have succeeded in providing a safe and secure environment for the operation of the federal courts through the development of effective court security techniques. The use of magnetometers, closed-circuit television monitors, electronic alarm systems and other devices within the court facilities—in addition to well-trained and alert security personnel—have resulted in the confiscation of thousands of weapons at the entrance to courthouses, the interception of explosives and other harmful devices, and the avoidance of physical assault on judges and prosecutors.

In addition, the Marshals Service has established a Threat Analysis Division whose mission is to provide an immediate assessment of the validity of any threat and, in cooperation with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, the division designs an appropriate protective response.

Nonetheless, the security measures employed by the Marshals Service at federal court facilities or in response to a specific threat situation are not a substitute for the practical steps an individual can and should take to minimize personal risk outside the workplace. This booklet outlines many of those steps.

I join with the Attorney General in urging you to adopt these suggestions and I also invite you to discuss security procedures with the Marshal in your district.

K. M. Moore
Director
U.S. Marshals Service

"I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT!"

The potential danger associated with the life of a public official or law enforcement officer is an unpleasant topic of conversation among family and friends. But avoiding the subject does not lessen the potential for harm. Indeed, a frank discussion and thoughtful consideration of practical measures that will increase your safety and that of your family members can not only reduce your—and their—vulnerability to acts of violence, but it can lead to steps that will help save lives in the unlikely event that an attempt to harm you or your family should actually occur.

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of threats against members of the federal judiciary, U.S. Attorneys, law enforcement executives and public officials. To a significant extent, the potential for violence has grown in proportion to the increased frequency with which violent criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists are tried in federal courts.

Providing for the security of the federal courts and the protection of judges, court officials, witnesses, and jurors is the principal mission of the United States Marshals Service. This means ensuring security within the courtroom itself, as well as personal protection for judicial officers and others away from the court facilities when warranted. However, this security function of the Marshals Service is no substitute for awareness on the part of judicial and other public officials that *the adoption of certain practical procedures in their personal and family routines is the most important element in personal security.*

It's Up to You to Take the First Step!

Familiarize your family with the necessary protective measures and techniques in this handbook. Review these measures periodically. Ensure that everyone in the family knows what to do in an emergency. *And,* when anything suspicious occurs that just might suggest a threat to your safety, call

the U.S. Marshal's office and/or local police. Let *them* decide "its nothing to worry about."

"On the Other Hand..."

Let's put this matter of "threats" in perspective. The potential for violence to you or your family is an important subject. When the rare incidents of assaults on public officials or attempts at intimidation actually occur, they attract tremendous attention from the news media and, as a result, violence in one form or another seems to be everywhere. *It is not!* Nevertheless, you need to be informed and to take sensible precautions—like discussing the matter with your family members.

As a practical matter, you are hundreds of times more likely to be injured from a fall at home or on the tennis court or to be killed in an automobile accident than to ever be involved in a work-related assault or hostage situation. The chances of you or your family becoming victims of that sort are very slight — and you can reduce the risk even further.

This handbook attempts to tell you how.

House, Home, and Family

Many of the suggestions that follow are very basic and may already be part of your normal routine. However, it may not be correct to assume that all of your family members are similarly conscious of the need for personal security practices. Be on the safe side. Go over these points with them so that they can feel confident that both they and you are taking good care of yourselves.

Tips for the Family at Home

✓ Restrict the possession of house keys. Change locks if keys are lost or stolen and when moving into a previously occupied residence.

✓ Lock all entrances at night, including the garage. Keep the house locked, even if you are at home.

✓ Personally destroy all envelopes or other items that reflect your name and official position.

✓ Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors.

✓ Arrange for an unlisted home telephone number (so that your address will not be too readily accessible).

Be Suspicious

✓ Be alert to public utility crews or any workmen requesting access to your residence; check their identities through a peep-hole before allowing entry.

✓ Be alert to peddlers and strangers.

✓ Write down license numbers of suspicious vehicles; note descriptions of occupants.

✓ Refuse unordered packages.

✓ ***Never*** eat candy or other foodstuffs that are delivered to your residence from an unknown source. If such items are received, notify the U.S. Marshal or local police.

✓ Treat with suspicion any inquiries about the whereabouts or activities of other family members.

✓ Report all suspicious activity to the U.S. Marshals Service and/or local police.

Telephone Security

✓ Post emergency numbers on the telephone:

U.S. Marshal
Local Police
Fire Department
Hospital

✓ Do not answer your telephone with your name or official title.

✓ Report all threatening phone calls to the U.S. Marshal's office.

When Going Out

✓ Avoid high risk areas and vary movements so as not to be predictable.

✓ Try to be inconspicuous when using public transportation and facilities. Dress, conduct, and mannerisms should not attract attention.

✓ Avoid public demonstrations; do not be curious.

Special Precautions For Children

✓ Never leave young children alone or unattended. Be certain when they are left, they are in the care of a trustworthy person.

✓ Instruct children to keep doors and windows locked, and never to admit strangers.

✓ Teach children how to contact the police or a neighbor in an emergency.

✓ If it is necessary to leave children at home, keep the house well lighted and notify the neighbors.

✓ Know where your children are all the time—morning, noon, and night.

✓ Advise your children to:

—Never leave home without advising their parents where they will be and who will accompany them.

—Travel in pairs or groups.

—Walk along busy streets and avoid isolated areas.

—Use play areas where recreational activities are supervised by responsible adults and where police protection is readily available.

—Refuse automobile rides from strangers and refuse to accompany strangers anywhere on foot...even if the strangers say mom or dad sent them or said it was okay.

—Report immediately to the nearest person of authority (teacher, police) anyone who attempts to molest or annoy them.

Suspicious Packages or Mail

Suspicious characteristics to look for include:

✓ An unusual or unknown place of origin.

✓ No return address.

✓ An excessive amount of postage.

✓ Abnormal or unusual size.

✓ Oily stain on the package.

✓ Wires or strings protruding from or attached to an item.

✓ Incorrect spelling on a package label.

✓ Differing return address and postmark.

✓ Appearance of foreign style handwriting.

✓ Peculiar odor. (Many explosives smell like shoe polish or almonds.)

✓ Unusual heaviness or lightness.

✓ Uneven balance or shape.

✓ Springiness in the top, bottom, or sides.

✓ Never cut tape, strings, or other wrappings on a suspected package. Never immerse a suspected letter or package in water. Either of these actions could cause an explosive device to detonate.

✓ Never touch or move a suspicious package or letter.

✓ Report any suspicious packages or mail to the U.S. Marshal's office or local police immediately.

Domestic Employees

✓ Conduct a thorough review of references.

✓ Inform employees about security responsibilities.

✓ Instruct them as to which phone or other means of communication to use in an emergency.

Security Precautions When You're Away

✓ Leave house with lived-in look.

✓ Stop deliveries or direct them to a neighbor's home.

✓ Don't leave notes on doors.

✓ Don't hide keys outside house.

✓ Use a timer to turn lights on and off at varying times and locations.

✓ Leave radio on. (Best with a timer.)

✓ Hide valuables.

✓ Notify the police or a trusted neighbor of your absence.

Residential Security

✓ Exterior grounds:

—Do not put your name on the outside of your residence or mailbox.

—Have good lighting.

—Control vegetation to eliminate hiding places.

✓ Entrances and exits should have:

—Solid door with deadbolt locks.

—One way peep-holes in doors.

—Bars and locks on skylights.

✓ Equip glass doors and ground floor windows with interior release mechanisms that are not reachable from outside.

✓ Interior features:

—Alarm and intercom systems.

—Fire extinguishers.

—Medical and first-aid equipment.

✓ Other desirable features:

—A clear view of approaches.

—More than one access road.

—Off-street parking.

Ground Transportation Security

Many of the cautions noted in connection with travel, both local and international, may strike the reader as too obvious; nothing more than common sense. Other points may seem "extreme"— and, indeed, they are. You are unlikely to ever need to "jump a curb" at 35 miles per hour or "belly crawl" on the floor of an airport. But the purpose of this booklet is to inform the reader of a broad range of personal security considerations so that you can avoid unnecessary risk and deal knowledgeably with a dangerous situation if that should become necessary.

Criminal and terrorists acts against individuals usually occur outside the home and after the individual's habits have been established. Your most predictable habit is the route of travel from home to office or to commonly frequented local facilities.

Vehicles

✓ Do not use "vanity" plates that identify you by name or official position.

✓ Do not have your name or official title displayed at your office parking place.

Auto maintenance:

✓ Keep vehicle in good repair. You don't want it to fail when you need it most.

✓ Keep gas tank at least 1/2 full at all times.

✓ Park in well-lighted areas.

✓ Always lock your car...even when it's outside your house.

✓ Don't leave it on the street overnight, if possible.

✓ Never get out without checking for suspicious persons. If in doubt, drive away.

✓ Leave only the ignition key with parking attendants.

✓ Don't allow entry to the trunk unless you're there to watch.

✓ Never leave garage doors open or unlocked.

✓ Use a remote garage door opener if available. Enter and exit your car in the security of the closed garage.

On the Road

✓ Before leaving buildings to get into your vehicle, check the surrounding area to determine if anything of a suspicious nature exists. Display the same wariness before exiting your vehicle.

✓ Before entering vehicles, check for suspicious objects on the seats and floor.

✓ Guard against the establishment of routines by varying times, routes, and modes of travel.

✓ Avoid isolated roads and dark alleys.

✓ Know locations of safe havens along routes of routine travel.

✓ Habitually ride with seatbelts buckled, doors locked, and windows closed.

✓ Do not allow your vehicle to be boxed in; maintain a minimum 8-foot interval between you and the vehicle in front and avoid the inner lanes.

✓ Be alert while driving or riding.

✓ Know how to react if surveillance is suspected or confirmed.

—Circle the block for confirmation of surveillance.

—Do not stop or take other actions which could lead to confrontation.

—Do not drive home if you think you are being followed.

—Get description of car and its occupants.

—Go to nearest safe haven. Report incident to the U.S. Marshal's office and/or local police.

✓ Recognize events that can signal the start of an attack such as:

—Cyclist falling in front of your car.

—Flagman or workman stopping your car.

—Fake police checkpoint.

—Disabled vehicle/accident victims on the road.

—Unusual detours.

—An accident in which your car is struck.

—Cars or pedestrian traffic that box you in.

—Sudden activity or gunfire.

✓ Know what to do if under attack in a vehicle.

—Without subjecting yourself, passengers, or pedestrians to harm, try to draw attention to your car by sounding the horn.

—Put another vehicle between you and your pursuer.

—Execute immediate turn and escape, jump curb if necessary; 30-45 degree angle, 35mph maximum.

—Ram blocking vehicle if necessary.

—Go to closest safe haven.

—Report incident to the U.S. Marshal's office and local police.

Commercial Buses, Trains, and Taxis

✓ Vary mode of commercial transportation.

✓ Select busy stops.

✓ Don't always use the same taxi company.

✓ Don't let someone you don't know direct you to a specific cab.

✓ Ensure face of driver and picture on license are the same.

✓ Try to travel with a companion.

✓ If possible, specify the route you want the taxi to follow.

Traveling Defensively By Air

Air travel, particularly to foreign countries, poses security problems different from those of ground transportation. Here too, simple precautions can reduce the hazards of an assault.

Making Travel Arrangements

✓ Don't use title or office address on tickets, travel documents, or hotel reservations.

✓ Select window seat; they offer more protection since aisle seats would be closer to a hijacker's movements up and down the aisle.

✓ Rear seats also offer more protection since they are farther from the center of hostile action which is often near the cockpit.

✓ Seats at an emergency exit may provide an opportunity to escape.

Personal Identification

✓ Consider use of a tourist passport, if you have one, with necessary visas providing it's allowed by the country you are visiting.

✓ If you use a tourist passport, consider placing your government passport, official ID, and related documents in your checked luggage, not in your wallet or briefcase.

✓ If you must carry these documents on your person, select a hiding place onboard the aircraft to "ditch" them in case of a hijacking.

✓ Ensure luggage tags don't show your official title.

Precautions At The Airport

✓ Look for nervous passengers who maintain eye contact with others from a distance. Note behavior not consistent with that of others in the area.

✓ No matter where you are in the terminal, identify objects suitable for cover in the event of attack. Pillars, trash cans, luggage, large planters, counters, and furniture can provide protection.

✓ Don't linger near open public places.

✓ Avoid secluded areas that provide concealment for attackers.

✓ Be aware of unattended baggage anywhere in the terminal.

✓ Report suspicious activity to airport security personnel.

Actions If Attacked

✓ Dive for cover. Do not run.

✓ If you must move, belly crawl or roll. Stay low to the ground, using available cover.

✓ Place arms and elbows next to your rib cage to protect your lungs, heart, and chest. Cover your ears, head with your hands to protect neck arteries, ears, and skull.

✓ Responding security personnel will not be able to recognize you from attackers. Do not attempt to assist them in any way. Lie still until told to get up.

Actions if Hijacked

✓ Remain calm, be polite and cooperative with your captors.

✓ Be aware that all hijackers may not reveal themselves at the same time. A lone hijacker may be used to draw out security personnel for neutralization by other hijackers.

✓ Surrender your tourist passport in response to a general demand for identification.

✓ Discretely dispose of any U.S. affiliated documents.

✓ Don't offer any information; confirm your official position if directly confronted with the fact. Be prepared to explain that you always travel on your personal passport and that no deceit was intended.

✓ Don't draw attention to yourself through sudden body movements, verbal remarks, or hostile looks.

✓ Prepare yourself for possible verbal and physical abuse, lack of food, drink, and sanitary conditions.

✓ If permitted, read, sleep, or write to occupy your time.

✓ Discretely observe your captors and get a thorough physical description. Include voice patterns and language distinctions, as well as clothing and unique physical characteristics.

✓ Cooperate with any rescue attempt. Lie on the floor until told to rise.

Family Data

Police agencies need timely and accurate information to effectively respond to threat situations. Keep this data on hand, ready to give to the U.S. Marshal and other police authorities.

Personal Information

Today's Date:
Full Name:
Nickname:
Official Title:
Position:
Home Address:
Phone:
SSN:
Race:
Height:
Build:
Weight:
Hairline:
Glasses (Prescription):

Color of Hair:
Color of Eyes:
Distinguishing Marks:
Place of Birth:
Citizenship:
Languages Spoken:
Medical Requirements or Problems:
Medication Required and Time Intervals:
Provide Three Signature Samples:

Attach two photographs, one full length front view and one full length side view.

Spouse

Today's Date:
Full Name:
Nickname:
Official Title:
Position:
Home Address:
Phone:
SSN:
Race:
Height:
Build:
Weight:
Hairline:
Glasses (Prescription):

Color of Hair:
Color of Eyes:
Distinguishing Marks:
Place of Birth:
Citizenship:
Languages Spoken:
Medical Requirements or Problems:
Medication Required and Time Intervals:
Provide Three Signature Samples:

Attach two photographs, one full length
front view and one full length side view.

Child(ren)

Today's Date:
Full Name:
Nickname:
Home Address:
Phone:
SS#:
Race:
Height:
Build:
Weight:
Hairline:
Glasses (Prescription):

Color of Hair:
Color of Eyes:
Distinguishing Marks:
Place of Birth:
Citizenship:
Languages Spoken:
Medical Requirements or Problems:
Medication Required and Time Intervals:
Provide Three Signature Samples:

Attach two photographs, one full length front view and one full length side view.

Vehicles

Make and Year:
Model:
Style:
License/State:

Distinctive Markings:
Color:
Doors:
Vehicle ID:

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U.S. Marshals Service
600 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202